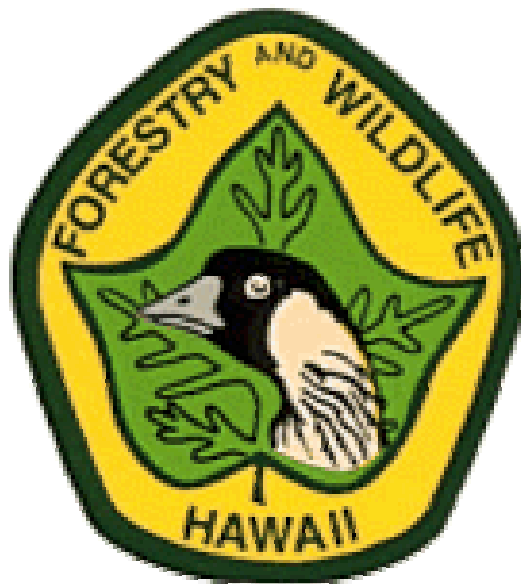


# **Downtown Honolulu Trees**

## **Self-Guided Tour**



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8-11-92

136

233

NO



STATE  
CAPITOL

KALANIMOKU  
BLDG.

HOTEL ST.

STATE  
LIBRARY

IOLANI  
PALACE

KING STREET

POST  
OFFICE

PUNCHBOWL ST.

QUEEN ST.



## Downtown Trees Self Guided Tour

There is no set starting point or particular route to follow. Most trees are marked on the map with an identification number. In some instances, the number refers to a group of several trees of the same kind. The map is an aerial photo taken in August, 1992. Find your location on the map, find the number of the tree you are viewing, and look up that number on the accompanying list for the name and description of the tree or trees represented by the number.

1. Monkey-pod *Samanea (Pithecellobium) saman* This is the most common large tree in the Capitol area. The local name for the tree, monkey-pod, is derived from the old Greek word *Pithecellobium*, which means "monkey's earring." Elsewhere, it is called rain-tree. This tree was introduced from Mexico in 1847 and is a common shade tree in the lowlands of all the islands. It is naturalized in several locations. The attractively colored, easy to work with wood is valued for craft work, particularly carvings and turned bowls. A row of monkeypod trees fronts the Kalanimoku Building as well as the Hemmeter Building on Hotel Street and the post office on King Street.
2. Gold Tree or Primavera *Tabebuia (Cybistax) donnel-smithii* This tree loses all or a portion of its leaves usually in March or April and the leafless branches flower spectacularly with masses of bright yellow flowers. Also highly valued in its native Central America as a timber tree, the source of primavera or white mahogany.
3. Kapok *Ceiba pentandra* There are three trees. A large one on the King Street side of Iolani Palace, one at Queen's Hospital, and a smaller tree on the Capitol grounds near Punchbowl and Beretania Streets. This native of tropical America produces the kapok or silk-cotton that was once used to stuff life jackets and mattresses. It grows to enormous size. The largest kapok in Hawaii is at Foster Gardens.
4. Earpod or Elephant's Ear *Enterolobium cyclocarpum* The semi-circular pods of this tree resemble elephant ears, thus the name. It is called guanacaste or jenisero in its native Central and South America. Its wood looks much like that of monkey-pod, but is sawdust causes severe sneezing. The largest earpod tree is at Foster Gardens, a gigantic specimen.
5. False Kamani *Terminalia catappa* Native to Indonesia and Papua-New Guinea, this tree was introduced some time before 1800 for shade and perhaps food. The almond-shaped nuts are marginally edible. The leaves, though larger and often red in color, somewhat resemble those of the kamani (*Calophyllum inophyllum*). Both trees are naturalized near beaches.
6. Royal Poinciana or Flame Tree *Delonix regia* A native of Madagascar, this tree, like monkey-pod, has been taken throughout the world tropics, but in this case, for its attractive flowers, rather than shade. In the Caribbean, it is called Flamboyant. It carries a heavy load of large dark-brown pods most of the year which detracts from its appearance when it is not in flower.

7. **Rainbow Shower** *Cassia fistula x javanica* This hybrid between the pink and white shower and the golden shower trees happened naturally in Hawaii and has since been propagated extensively by air-layering. The trees are infertile. Because it doesn't produce messy pods like its parent species, the City of Honolulu uses it extensively as a street tree. Two are identified on the map; one near the bandstand of the Iolani Palace grounds and one near the crosswalk on Punchbowl Street.
8. **Tiger's Claw or Coral Tree** *Erythrina variegata* This native of India loses all its leaves in the spring before flowering with clusters of claw-shaped scarlet blossoms. This very fast growing tree produces masses of dark pods that cling to its branches, detracting from its appearance when free of leaves. It is almost always flat-topped and short in height. There are several *Erythrina* species in Hawaii, including the endemic wiliwili (*E. sandwicensis*).
9. **Royal Palm** *Roystonea regia* These palms, with stems that appear to be made of concrete, were first introduced to Hawaii from Jamaica. A closely related palm, *Roystonea elata* from Florida is also present in Hawaii. The green upper stem is made up of tightly compressed leaf bases. In most instances, the map number refers to a line or group of these trees rather than a single individual. The best example of royal palm is at the vicinity of the eternal flame on Beretania Street fronting the State Capitol.
10. **Indian Rubber Tree** *Ficus elastica* This is another fig species that is popular as a potted plant on the mainland, but grows to a large size here. The bark yields latex, but does not produce as good rubber as the South American *Hevea* and *Castilla* species. This tree does not set seed in Hawaii because the wasp necessary for pollination is absent. There are three trees of slightly different appearances on the Iolani Palace grounds and three others at Washington Place.
11. **Chinese Banyan** *Ficus benjamina* This attractive tree is very common around the city and as it is quite tolerant of shade, is often used as an indoor houseplant, both here and on the mainland. It only produces extensive aerial roots when grown in very wet locations. Normally there are few or none.
12. **Yokewood** *Catalpa longissima* This tree of the West Indies was introduced quite early as an ornamental. As the name implies, it has a strong, heavy wood suitable for yokes for oxen.
13. **Cohune Nut Palm** *Orbignya cohune* These tall, straight palms with ringed trunks are from Central America. They are popular as avenue trees because their leaves point upwards, out of the way of vehicles.
14. **Indian Banyan** *Ficus benghalensis* The largest Indian Banyan is on the grounds of Iolani Palace, which is actually two trees with many aerial roots that are so large they appear to be separate trunks. This species is the only true banyan, although in Hawaii, many *Ficus* or fig species are also called banyans. The small red fruit of this tree is edible, but rarely eaten.

15. Kou *Cordia subcordata* Kou was probably introduced by the Hawaiians because it was only found near dwelling sites. The attractive light and dark banded wood was used for the finest calabashes and other woodenware, being easier to work and lower in bitter-tasting tannin than koa (*Acacia koa*). Kou flowers are orange. Flowers of a similar tree of more recent introduction, *Cordia sebestena*, are red.
16. Kamani *Calophyllum inophyllum* This is a Polynesian introduction of Hawaii that is common throughout the Pacific Islands. It was considered sacred in many parts of Polynesia and probably in Hawaii. The nuts produce an oil which is used medicinally. The wood has a very attractive pattern and may be viewed on the main or throne room floor of Iolani Palace where the panels in the koa doors are made of kamani.
17. Yellow Poinciana *Peltophorum pterocarpum* This was one of the earliest ornamentals introduced to Hawaii and it was very common in the downtown area until a hurricane force storm in December, 1918 blew most of them down. About the only trees left are these in the Capitol vicinity. Yellow Poinciana, a native of Malaya, produces massive numbers of yellow flowers in June and July requiring a cleanup job similar to that of a New England autumn, when the leaves fall. The reddish-brown wood has an attractive pattern suitable for furniture.
18. Coconut *Cocos nucifera* The origin of the coconut is uncertain, but most experts believe that the Indo-Pacific was its original habitat. This tree has been the most useful plant to Pacific Islanders. It supplies food and drink, and its leaves can be woven into thatching and baskets. It is the source of copra, formally the main, and often the only cash crop of most of the islands in the Pacific. The Hawaiians called it niu, and their original variety had a very long, skinny crooked stem, which can still be seen around Iolani Palace. Many other varieties have been introduced, those with short stems being especially popular. Many coconut stems in the Capitol area have constrictions partway up their stems. This is caused when the trees are transplanted and diameter growth is reduced while the tree's root system recovers.
19. Kiawe *Prosopis pallida* This tree next to Kawaiahao Church was already large in 1855 when one of the earliest photos of the church was taken. Kiawe is from coastal Chile where it is known as called algarrabo. In Hawaii it is known as algaroba or mesquite. The first Catholic missionary, Father Bachelot, brought a single seed with him from Paris and planted it in 1828 on land he had been granted for a church on what is now Fort Street. The tree turned out to be kiawe. Cattle and horses ate the seed pods and rapidly spread the tree around the almost treeless city and subsequently around the dry lowlands on all the islands. As recently as 1920, kiawe was considered to be Hawaii's most valuable tree as it provided watershed cover on land where no other trees would grow, provided fodder, was an excellent honey tree, had very durable wood for fence posts, and was a major fuelwood supplier. Most of the former kiawe forest has been replaced with hotels and golf courses.

20. Queensland Kauri *Agathis robusta* Unless you are familiar with kauri trees, it is unlikely that you would recognize them as conifers, or cone-bearing trees. This large tree was introduced about 1870 from Australia, where it is an excellent timber tree, although its wood is not the equal of the famous New Zealand kauri. There are only a few of these trees in Hawaii. In recent years, many were cut down in Hilo because they were hollowed by termites and thought to be hazardous to the public. There is only one tree in the downtown area, which is an excellent example.
21. Golden Shower *Cassia fistula* Of the several *Cassia* species in Hawaii, this grows to the largest size. It produces, as the name implies, masses of bright yellow flowers. The seed pods are long, black cylinders that persist for several months in the crown before dropping. They contain a pulp used medicinally in India, where the tree is native.
22. Siamese Shower or Kassod Tree *Cassia siamea* Introduced about 1850, this tree of India and Malaysia is less attractive than several other *Cassia* species because of its less showy flowers and persistent seed pods. It has very attractive, highly figured wood that is locally called pheasant wood for its resemblance to a pheasant's tail. The wood is used in craft items.
23. Tamarind *Tamarindus indica* Said to have been introduced in 1797 by Don Francisco Marin, the tamarind may be the first tree introduced by a non-Hawaiian. It is native to the dry regions of Africa and Asia where it is a favorite shade and fruit tree. The short, fat pods contain a "sweet and sour" sticky pulp around the seeds, which has laxative properties and can be eaten raw. There are other medicinal uses for the fruit, but it is used mostly for flavoring chutney. The tree is rare in Hawaii except in downtown Honolulu.
24. Hala or Screw Pine *Pandanus spp.* There are many species of *Pandanus* common in the Pacific Islands and several species native to Hawaii. Hala was one of the most useful plants the Hawaiians had. Its leaves were used for mats, sails, and roofing and its fruit was marginally edible as well as supplying paint brushes for some tapa making. Screw pine is the Floridian name for the tree and is based on its circular leaf whorls.
25. Oil Palm *Elaeis guineensis* This African tree has been taken throughout the tropics and cultivated for the oil borne in its fruit, which are the round nuts clustered at the leaf bases. Palm oil is no longer very popular in the U.S., because it is extremely high in saturated fat and cholesterol. These trees are in line with the royal palms fronting the entry road to Iolani Palace.
26. Fern Tree *Filicium decipiens* Grown for its attractive leaf form, this tree is from India where its strong wood is used in building construction.